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ABSTRACT

Through Japanses comic strips (called "manga" in Japanese) students can gain an appreciation not only for the different sensibilities of the Japanese but for similarities as well. One unit consists of an essay, a comic strip, frame by frame explanations, and questions for discussion. In total, there are nine units because odd numbers are considered lucky in Japan. The individual units are: "The New Year in Japan"; "Education"; "Coffee Shops, Discos, and Bars"; "Martial Arts and Kendo"; "Housing"; "Girl's Day"; "A Day in the Life of One Japanese Homemaker"; "Pachinko"; and "Japanese Ghosts and Cats." (BZ)

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GLIMPSES OF JAPAN THROUGH COMICS

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

CENTER FOR EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC STUDIES

GLIMPSES OF JAPAN THROUGH COMICS

CARON ALLEN

COMICS BY RYOHEI SAIGAN

CENTER FOR EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC STUDIES
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Teacher's Note

It is suggested that for grades up through junior high school, only the comics and frame explanations be read by the students. Teachers can use the essay as a means of introduction and background to each unit. As for the high school level, the book can be used in full by the students. Class discussions are left to the teacher's discretion.

INTRODUCTION--GUIDE FOR READER

This book is intended to present a small slice of the pie we call Japanese life and culture. It presents by no means a broad overview nor a detailed account. However it is hoped that through a few comic strips (called MANGA in Japanese), the student will gain some appreciation not only for different sensibilities of the Japanese but for the similarities as well.

Before we begin our travels it is best to make introductions. There are four main characters.

This is Shimpei (pronounced "Sheempay").

He is the father and also a professional photographer.

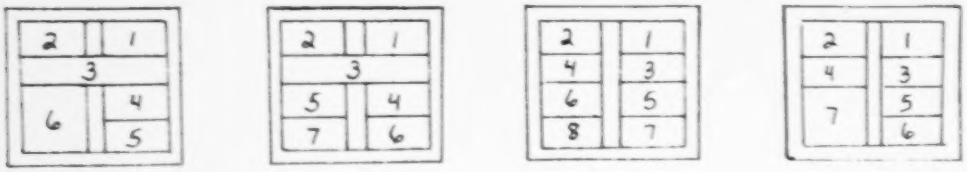
This is Tanpopo (tan = ton as in tonsil
po = po as in pole).

She is the mother and works as a graphic arts illustrator.

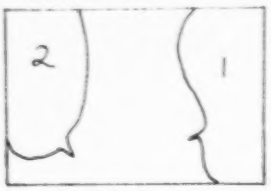
This is Sumire, their daughter (su as in Sue
mi as in me
re as in ray).

This is Tora, the family's cat (To as in toe
ra as in rock).

The comics are arranged in Japanese order, meaning that the boxes are to be read from right to left. For example, model pages are as follows:



The boxes have been numbered for your convenience. Within one box, you will usually read the right balloon before the left.

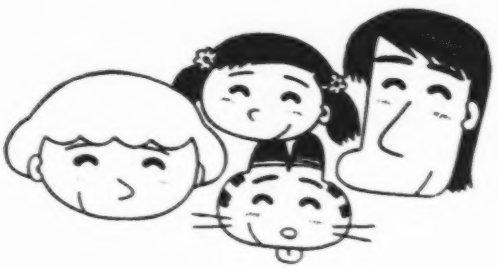


Some boxes have asterisks next to their numbers and perhaps a letter next to some object portrayed. After the strip you will find an explanation corresponding to that asterisk or letter.

Japanese words appearing throughout the text will be underlined. The letter "o" in parentheses before a word is called an "honorific o" and indicates respect for the object it precedes. The dashes over vowels indicate that they are sounded longer than unmarked vowels. These dashes are important because their absence or presence can change the meaning of a word.

One unit consists of an essay, a comic strip, frame-by-frame explanations and questions for discussion. In total there are nine units because odd numbers are considered lucky in Japan. It is suggested that you read the essay first, then read through the comic strip, and finally turn to the frame-by-frame explanations. When you've read through all three sections, then read the strip again and see how much more you will understand! Lastly, each unit ends with suggested questions for discussion.

We all hope you enjoy our adventures!



UNIT 1

THE NEW YEAR IN JAPAN

The most intense and vital holiday in the Japanese calendar is the New Year. It is marked by a period of celebration in which the whole country is seemingly transformed into a festival ground where one bids farewell to the old and seeks renewal and freshness in the coming year.

The New Year was associated with the ending of the coldest season (called daikan or "great cold"), and the entrance of spring. The period of celebration is not confined to one day. Most of Japan shuts down for at least the first three days so that people can take vacations, visit friends and relatives, celebrate, and rest.

There is a great deal of local variation when it comes to festivals in Japan but the practices described below will pertain to the urban celebration in general.

As the New Year approaches, homemakers busy themselves with shopping and cleaning, as in any holiday preparation. The house is given a thorough cleaning and the paper on sliding doors, called shōji, is changed. Even the rags are washed before midnight because no cooking or cleaning are to be done during the three days of rest. It is believed that the gods of good fortune come into the house during New Year's and one certainly would not want to sweep them away!

On New Year's Eve, as the excitement heightens, some families watch television shows such as a countdown of the years' top musical hits, similar to our radio broadcasts. A type of buckwheat noodle called toshikoshi-soba (year-end noodle) is frequently served as a symbol of longevity because it is long. Then, as midnight draws near, people at home watching television or those amongst boisterous, happy crowds in shrines and temples anxiously wait to hear the joya no kane (the New Year's Eve bell). A bell is rung 108 times to symbolize the sweeping away of sins and troubles of the old year which are to be left behind as the last sounding of the bell is struck at midnight. One is now free to start fresh. The atmosphere is joyful and gay as warm bonfires illuminate a sea of faces. Hot sake called (o)toso bubbling in large kettles is poured out by amiable monks. This toso is a sweet rice wine spiced with cinnamon, pepper, and ginger, and is believed to preserve good health. At home one might toast with regular sake using three cups of successive size (called sakazuki) which represent heaven, earth, and man. Three sips are taken from each cup by every member of the family. For those still back at the shrine, the Japanese National Railways keeps the trains running all night long.

On New Year's morning, the table is decorated with the best dishes and fresh new chopsticks in beautiful folders. The tone for the day is one of newness, joy, and celebration in order to start the year right. A dish called (o)zoni is most commmonly served and consists of a fish-based soup with vegetables and glutinous rice balls called mochi. Also, envelopes of money called (o)toshidama are given to children.

After breakfast, the day is spent in various ways but usually includes a visit to the neighborhood shrine to pray for a happy, healthy, and successful new year. In fact, there is a term called hatsumode which means "the first shrine or temple visit of the new year." This trip does not necessarily have to be made on January first but is often made within the first few weeks of the year. While sporting one's best clothes, one offers prayers; the atmosphere is like that of a carnival. Toys and trinkets are sold, and ring toss along with a variety of other childrens' games also add to the fun. Food is served and the shrine-goers can take a rest in lovely gardens while sipping hot tea.

Charms, amulets, and talismans of all shapes, colors, and sizes express the wishes for the year. For example, one charm takes the form of a tiny rake with bells, ribbons and blessings attached; it symbolizes raking in good fortune. Another special item is a Daruma doll, an image of the famous Indian Buddhist monk, which always bounces back when tipped because of a legless, smooth bottom. The Japanese hope that they too can "bounce back" after suffering some hardship. The eyes of the Daruma doll are sold blank so that an individual can fill in one of the eyes at the time he makes a wish for the year, and can fill in the other eye upon attainment of his goal. Children can also bring home as souvenirs long sticks of candy which are wrapped in bags decorated with symbols of longevity, the crane and the tortoise. The crane is said to live one thousand years and the tortoise, ten thousand years.

The day might also be spent receiving visitors or calling upon others. People get together to eat, drink, watch television (which broadcasts traditional performing arts), and play games. A traditional game for girls called hanetsuki is like badminton. The solid wooden paddle is ornately decorated, looking too beautiful to use. There is also temari, where balls are bounced to the rhythm of poetic verse. Boys play with kites, called tako, and tops, koma. There are also mochi-making gatherings in which groups watch or participate in the pounding and steaming of rice to form the sticky rice balls called mochi.

The actual process of preparing for the year begins in December with a flurry of activities. Businessmen and fellow workers will hold a bōnenkai ('forget the year gathering'), a year end party for the healing of rifts and the resolidification of the bonds of comradery and friendship. Ideally, disagreements between people are settled and all debts are paid back. Also, there is a custom called (o)seibo which is gift exchange between those of special societal relations. Mailboxes are flooded with New Year cards called nengajō, relating wishes for continued health, success, and friendship.

Other interesting features of the holiday include special foods and decorations. One New Year's dish is known as osechiryōri. It consists of a variety of vegetables such as dried mushrooms, lotus roots, bamboo shoots, radish, carrots, and string beans boiled in a mixture of water, soy sauce, and sugar. These and other cold dishes are put in a three- or four-tiered lacquerware or porcelain box called a jūbako, since the mother is not supposed to be cooking for a few days. Other dishes include slices of squid which are incised with a knife in a criss-cross pattern, glazed with a sauce, and broiled so that a pine cone effect is created. The symbolism of the pine will

be discussed later. Still another type of seafood, the sea bream or tai is served whole because the name sounds like part of the word medetai (happy, auspicious), and to cut it up would obviously connote misfortune, incompleteness, or disharmony. Beans (mame), are eaten for good health and fish roe aptly stand for a rich progeny. Vinegared salads and vinegared rice balls with fish called sushi, and deep fried shrimp and vegetables (tempura), as well as Euro-American foods including French pastries and cakes may also be presented.

All in all, the New Year is a boisterous, bright season when people can let themselves go and shake the shackles of an old, tired year.

NEW YEAR DECORATIONS

The following constitutes a list of New Year decorations and their significance:

KADOMATSU (Frame 1-A). This is a decoration consisting of three bamboo stalks surrounded by pine branches and flowers which stands outside the gate or near the door of a home. In some places it was traditional to place one kadomatsu on either side of the entrance. One pine had smooth bark to represent the male element. Pine is symbolic of freshness, longevity, and faithfulness. Since pine needles are formed in pairs, they represent conjugal love. The fact that they are also sharp and pointy makes them able to ward off evil spirits and ghosts. Bamboo is a prolific plant as it can grow a number of feet within a matter of days so naturally it recalls vigor, endurance, and strength, but also flexibility as it gracefully bends with the wind.

SHIMENAWA (Frame 2-A). This is a rope often adorned with folded strips of white paper called gohei and is used to mark a special and sacred space or place. It's exact shape, size, style and material composition varies according to such factors as locality and cost. According to Japanese mythology, Amaterasu-ōmikami, the sun goddess, was offended by her brother and went into hiding in a cave. Other gods and spirits begged her to bring her light back outside but she refused. They began performing dances, magic, and music which eventually lured her out. To prevent her reentrance into the cave they hung a shimenawa across the opening. This rope later became associated with the power of exorcism to ward off the evil and malignant forces of impurity and disease. During the New Year season this shimenawa can be hung outside the door to protect the home. It can even be hung on car grills to promote safe driving, a must on the narrow byways of Japan! Fern leaves which connote an abundant progeny and an orange whose name daidai sounds the same as "generation to generation," are also attached to the rope.

KAGAMI MOCHI The balls of steamed, pounded rice called mochi are placed over white paper on a wooden stand (sanbo), and are often adorned with the same fern and orange. This lovely offering usually sits on a table just inside the entrance to a Japanese house.

SHŌCHIKUBAI Literally this means "pine, bamboo, and plum" and as made apparent by the examples above, they are the primary decorative motifs used for any kind of New Year goods. The plum is especially admired because it blooms in February in the midst of the snow; the pine and bamboo remain green throughout the winter.

JAPANESE CLOTHING STYLES

In thinking of Japan or the Japanese, probably one of the first images to arise is that of a lovely woman adorned in kimono, the traditional dress of Japan. However, this image is actually not as common as one might suspect. Basically the Japanese do not dress much differently from Americans; any style of western dress from French designer labels to blue jeans is the rule rather than the exception. Grade school and high school students must wear uniforms during school, but after school jeans and sweatshirts are popular.

The traditional manner of dress has not totally been abandoned as it is most often reserved for special occasions such as holidays, weddings, visits to shrines and temples, tea gatherings, and traditional musical or theatrical events. However, the expense and care of the kimono and its accessories can be prohibitive to its daily use, not to mention the weight and physical restrictions of the garment which render daily chores and activities somewhat difficult and cumbersome.

There is a light weight kimono called yukata, made of cotton and often patterned in blue and white which is still commonly worn in the home. For example, a man returning home from work might take a bath and then relax in a yukata the rest of the evening. At resorts a guest is most often supplied with a yukata in the summer and a heavy woolen kimono in the winter. Nowadays just about the only people who wear kimono outside on a regular basis are older women.

Kimono Aesthetics

Even though the kimono is based on one standard pattern, it varies much in terms of color, texture, and design. Some are cotton, synthetic blends, or silk, and there are numerous styles of embroidery, stitching, stencil, waxing, and tie-dyeing techniques (often associated with a province or locality), which can render a kimono into a work of art.

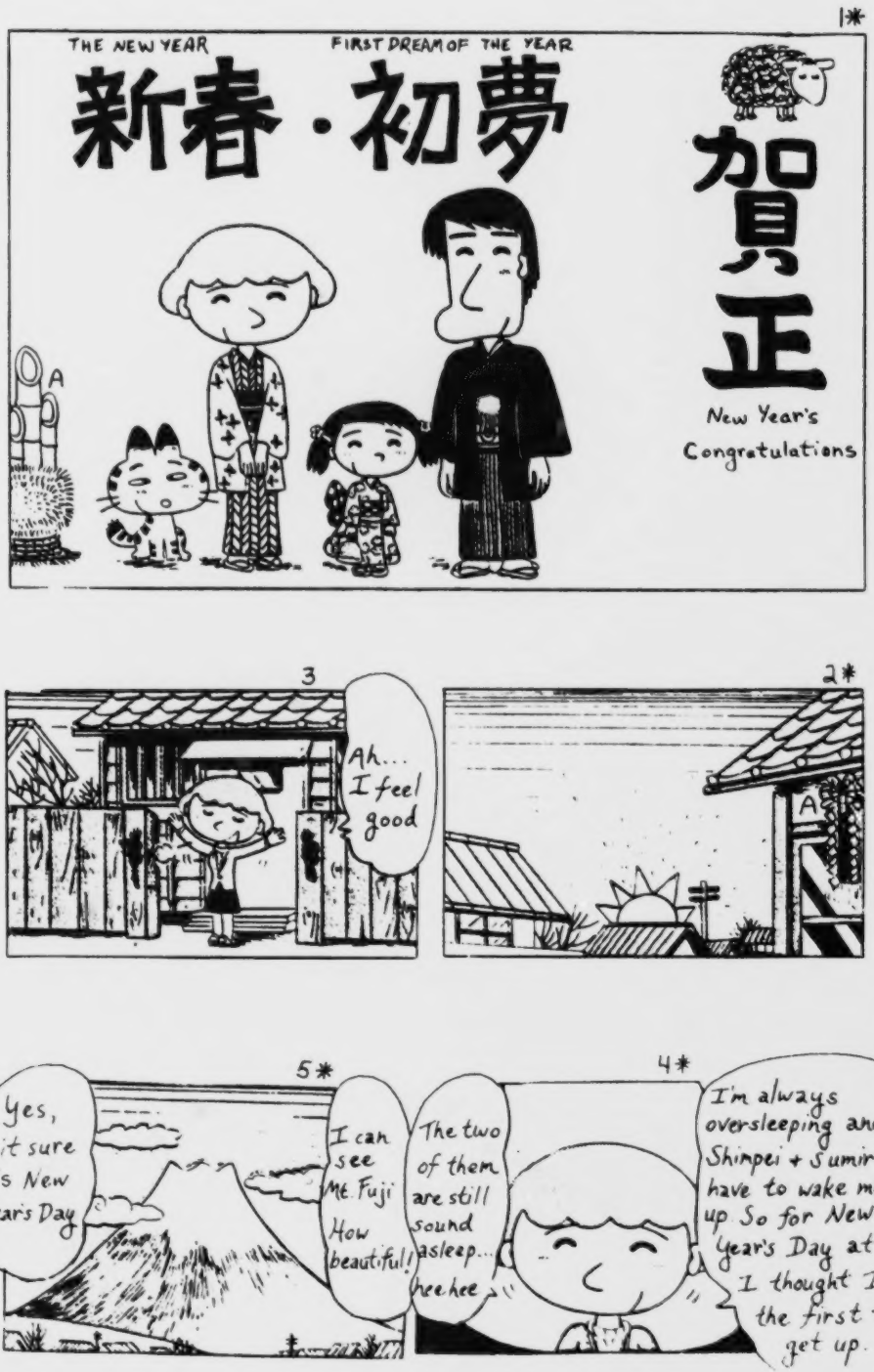
The color and design of the kimono vary according to the age and sex of the wearer. For instance, young girls wear a combination of bright colors such as red, green, blue, yellow, and orange. Young women still wear brighter colors but as they age, the colors become more pastel and the designs more subtle and subdued until they are grayed and silvered with grandmotherhood. A bride will often wear a gaily colored wedding robe while the guests dress formally in black with gold, silver and white accents. In addition to the formal garb, it is now fashionable to wear western style wedding dresses during part of the festivities.

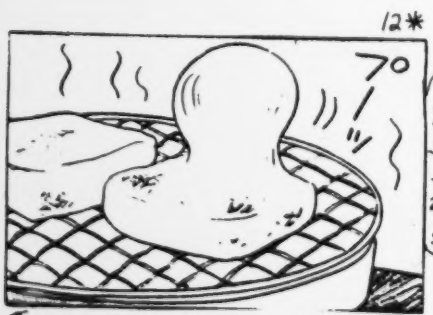
Males wear darker colors and less obvious designs; their obi, or sashes are thinner than those of women.

Kimono, in addition to varying with the age and sex of the wearer, can also reflect the seasons. For instance, bright red maple leaf designs can be worn in the fall, and plum blossoms in early spring.

The kimono is worn with various undergarments to protect it from being soiled, but the most outstanding accessory is called an obi. The obi is a sash approximately one foot wide and eight feet long and can be tied around

the waist in many different ways. The complete ensemble of kimono, obi, and accessories is held together by an amazing array of clips, cords, and modern innovations such as velcro. In fact, most people require assistance in order to put on kimono. Presently in Japan there are a number of "charm" schools springing up which specialize in such things as the art of putting on and the proper wearing of a kimono. It might be obvious to say that one's manner and deportment is necessarily different when one is decked in jeans as opposed to being graced in a kimono.


1*
THE NEW YEAR
FIRST DREAM OF THE YEAR
新春・初夢
賀正
New Year's Congratulations
A
3
Ah... I feel good
2*
A
5*
Yes, it sure is New Year's Day
I can see Mt. Fuji! How beautiful!
4*
The two of them are still sound asleep... hee hee
I'm always oversleeping and Shinpei + Sumire have to wake me up So for New Year's Day at least I thought I'd be the first to get up.



Tanpopo prepares a dish called zōni

14
13*
Zōni should do it for breakfast
16*
A
C
B
15
Good– I'll put it in the zōni.
I forgot there was that big eggplant laying around here.
18*
It's time to get up– come on!
Wow– you're all buried in the bedding!
17
Well, I suppose I'll be waking those two up soon.
20
Ahhh! That's me lying there!
19
Hey sleepyhead it's breakfast time!

Tanpopo awakens from her dream and hears the voice of Shinpei

26*
I'm a terrible wife but I'm asking you to put up with me this year too
A HAPPY NEW YEAR!!
24
It's already 11:00!
ボーン ボーン
It's great I had a lucky dream but if I'm going to be oversleeping starting with New Year's Day, then what's going to happen the rest of the year?!
25*
So much for the saying that it's lucky to dream about Mt. Fuji, hawks and eggplants.
A

FRAME BY FRAME EXPLANATION THE NEW YEAR

FRAME #1 - The little sheep pictured represents one of the twelve signs of the Japanese zodiac which is used to mark years, days, and hours. The strip was written in the "Year of the sheep." The twelve animals of the zodiac are as follows: rat, bull, tiger, hare, dragon, serpent, horse, sheep, ape, cock, dog, and boar.

The family is dressed in their traditional "New Year's Best." Sumire is the daughter's name and Shimpei is the husband's.

#5 - Mt. Fuji is of course the most famous mountain in Japan and is actually an extinct volcanoe. About 100,000 people climb Mt. Fuji a year as it is considered by some a sacred pilgrimage.

#7 SHŌJI - This is a window or sliding door made of latticed wood and covered on one side with paper. If a hole is accidentally poked into the paper, it can be repaired with patches of paper in beautiful shapes of snowflakes or flowers.

#8 - The Japanese use a variety of utensils for eating besides the usual knife, fork, and spoon with which we Americans are familiar. Since rice is a staple in their diet like bread is in ours, a typical table setting would include a ceramic bowl used just for rice. Soup is served in lacquer bowls and there are a variety of dishes used for fish, vegetables, and pickles. For an American who is accustomed to all the meat and potatoes on one plate, this array of vessels might seem "unnecessary" but actually the effect is quite artistic. Great care is given to the color, size, and texture of a food, its combination with other foods, and a plate which will truly set off these qualities. Eating, like so many other activities we deem mundane can be transformed into an aesthetic experience in Japan. There is even a sensibility to using wooden, ivory, or smooth lacquer chopsticks (hashi), which are gentler to the mouth than a cold, metal, pointed fork. As in any other culture there is a table etiquette and so the deportment of chopsticks has its own set of rules. For example, one never passes food from one person to the next with his own chopsticks for it recalls a Buddhist funerary ritual where the bones of the deceased are passed by family members. Furthermore, one

must never stick their chopsticks straight up in the rice because this position is only used in offerings to dead ancestors in the family shrine.

As the family sits down to a meal they say itadakimasu which is a gesture of humility in receiving the food and the efforts of all those responsible for growing and preparing the food. At the end of the meal, gochisō sama deshita is uttered in thanks to the cook who fussed over the preparation and serving of the meal.

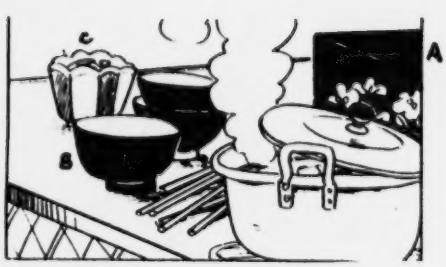
#9 - A. These sliding doors are called fusuma and differ from shōji in that they are solid pieces covered either with decorative paper or painted with scenes of nature.

B. This is a kerosene fueled heater which is, among other kinds of space heaters, a common and necessary addition to any Japanese home. Unlike the United States, central heating is not used in Japan, a fact which is partly due to exhorbitant fuel costs. As a result, each room is individually heated according to its use. It is a practical, efficient use of energy.

C. Along with space heaters this table or desk known as a kotatsu is popular as well. There is a heating unit underneath the table and a blanket which helps to insulate the heat so that one's legs and stomach are wonderfully warm but unfortunately the rest stays chilly.

#12 - Pictured is mochi cooking on a gas grill.

#13 - A. The chafing dish is connected to a gas outlet in the wall.



#16 - A. This is a jūbako (three to four - tiered lacquer box), for the cold New Year's dishes.

B. Lacquer dishes for the zōni.

C. Ceramic cup for pickles.

#18 - The bed pictured here is known as a futon and is the traditional type. Western style beds are used as well in some homes. Futon usually consist of a foam padding upon which a

thick, soft mattress is laid. They are not as hard and uncomfortable as they might seem because they are used on floors consisting of tatami. Tatami are straw mats about three inches thick and three by six feet long that cover the whole floor area of a room. In fact, the size of a room is often stated in terms of the total number of tatami mats. For instance, if there are six tatami in a room, it is simply called a six-mat room and a person can immediately get some sense of the dimension. Tatami, originally used as beds, were placed on top of the raised floor platform of a house. It was not until four or five hundred years ago that they gradually came to cover the entire floor area. Tatami are very comfortable to sit and walk upon. In order to keep them clean and in good repair, no shoes are worn on them. There is a Japanese proverb that says "The tatami, like a wife, is best when new."

The interesting feature of a futon as compared to a fixed bed is that it is rolled up and stored in closets during the day leaving the space free so that the same room can function as a study place, a dining room, or a bedroom, depending on the need at the time. It is an excellent way of conserving space in a crowded country. It is a common sight to see these gaily colored futon hanging from apartment buildings and house balconies to air in the sun.

#25 - There is a Japanese saying that it is lucky to dream about Mt. Fuji, hawks, and eggplants.

#26 - A. This plate is filled with a tangerine-like citrus called mikan.

Ordinarily in Japan it is the mother who gets up in advance and prepares breakfast and bag lunches for the family. The kitchen has been traditionally considered the female domain of the home and as a result there are many men who have never handled a knife or cooked a meal. This is of course a generalization as individual variation must always be taken into consideration. However, Tanpopo seems to be what is known in Japan as a "doji," a harmless, absentminded, well meaning individual who is a bit clumsy or disorganized. Therefore, it is only natural that her family take up the slack, so to speak.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think that the New Year is the most important, popular holiday for most Japanese?

2. Why would you suppose Japanese customs and holidays are so rich in symbolism? How about our own?

3. In what ways does the Japanese New Year differ from ours? What is the significance of the celebration for both countries?

UNIT 2

EDUCATION

The educational system and its role in Japanese society has been a controversial topic for some years. Since it is popularly believed that the only way to success, status, and security in life is through the "proper schooling," it is easy to see why education is an all-consuming "rite of passage" into Japanese society.

Japan has been for the past few centuries a highly literate country; for some time she has even outdistanced Europe and the United States. From the 17th to the 19th century, schooling was mainly for the samurai class but some commoners, including females, had some degree of learning throughout the 19th century. By 1907 schooling was made almost universal; it was mandatory and free through six grades. There was a five year middle school, a three year higher school for males only, and three to four years for university studies.

Post-war education was altered due to the American occupation which changed the 6-5-3-3 pre-war pattern to a 6-3-3-4 pattern. Six years of elementary school and three years of junior high were made compulsory and free and the next three years of senior high and four years of college were made optional.

Pre-university schooling is much more rigorous in Japan than America. The days are longer, classes run 5 1/2 days per week and the vacations are shorter. The school year begins in April and uniforms are mandatory.

If all the above is not enough, tutoring outside of school is all too common and a host of special tutorial centers called juku have proliferated due to the harsh high school and college entrance examinations. The process of taking exams is so highly competitive and notorious that it is referred to as "examination hell" (shiken jigoku).

The problem stems from the fact that universities are ranked and big business and government only recruit graduates from the highest ranking universities. Therefore once a student has passed an entrance exam and entered a top university, he is usually set for life, or at least until retirement at age 50 or 55.

A university education is not as rigorous in Japan as in America because most of the groundwork has already been taken care of. Japanese students usually do not "shop" for majors but rather they enter specialized fields from the beginning.

In any case, the years leading up to examination hell are rigorous; it is doubtful that Japanese children have as much leisure time as do their American counterparts. Anxious mothers who push their children to study are known as "kyōiku mama" or "education mothers." It should be mentioned that this pushiness is not a characteristic of Japanese women or mothers but rather a result of the fact that men spend more time at work and with their business associates than at home and so the responsibility for disciplining the children falls on the mother.

To return to our subject of exams, as a student nears exam time, the house is kept quiet, meals might be served at the student's desk, and he will be excluded from all household chores. A common sight at the shrines are prayers written by students on little wooden plaques which beseech kami (gods) to help them pass their exams.

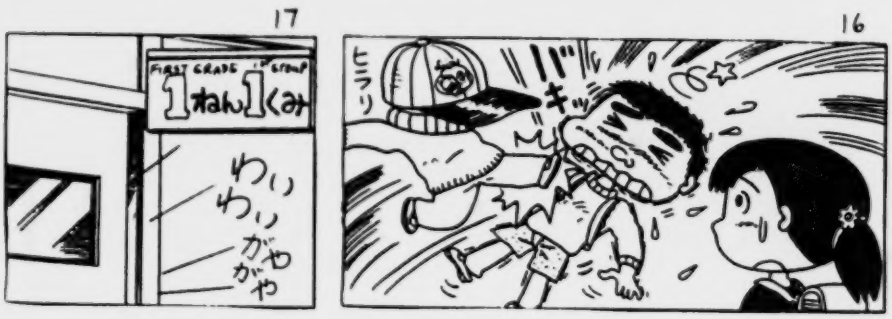
The results of the exams for more prestigious universities are announced on radio and television; the rest are posted on boards at school. As you can see, this is a tense, important time. The Japanese see success or failure on exams as having the power to make or break a person's future. A very few students who fail may even commit suicide. If a student does fail, he might spend one more year studying at a special school and try the exam again. These people are jokingly called rōnin, a word meaning "masterless samurai." Some will wait a year or even two or three until the next examination period comes and a passing grade is achieved.

It is obvious that education is taken very seriously and the overworked Japanese student is indeed not envied by the American.

1
スミレは一年生
SUMIRE IS A FIRST GRADER
八本木小学校
入学式
A
B
2
Daddy, Mommy I'm leaving
3
Oh! Wait, wait so I can see her off
Shimpei dear- Sumire is leaving!
4
Since this is your first day of school we'll walk you to the downstairs door
you really don't have to bother
5
Or why don't we take her to school?
great!
That's ok I'd be so embarrassed

7
It happens so quickly doesn't it?
Sumire is finally starting grade school
6
See you later
Well then watch out for cars, O.K?
Bye
8
but she has grown into a good, strong child
And to think both of us were always so busy — we really didn't spend enough time with her
10
9
since he couldn't go to school with Sumire he's probably off pouting somewhere
That reminds me, I haven't seen Tora around anywhere...
12
Oh! a bully....
11

14
13
15
huh?! (say something-come on!
How about being good friends? Want to be my girlfriend?
ha ha ha... are you in grade school?
ポン
Suddenly, out of nowhere....


17
16
FIRST GRADE
ヒラリ
キッ

19
18
ガタ
ガタ
ガタ
Everyone please sit wherever you like and we'll see....
First let's decide your seats

27

21
I'm so excited!
Wow- I'm in the same class as the boy who beat up the bully for me this morning!!
20
23
That's strange, There's supposed to be enough for everyone.
22
Teacher— I don't have a desk!
26
Oh! It's Tora!
Ugh! A cat disguised himself and snuck in here!
24
You! Take off your hat in the classroom!
25

SUMIRE IS A FIRST GRADER

FRAME #1 - One or two days before school instruction begins, a gathering for beginning students, parents and teachers (literally in Japanese an "entrance ceremony"), is held. School officials make speeches encouraging the new students to study hard.

#4 - In this comic strip, the family is evidently living in an apartment complex.

#26 - There is a folkloric tradition whereby foxes, racoons or in this case, cats, disguise themselves as beautiful women who bewitch men or can take on almost any other form in order to play mischievous tricks on human beings.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why are Japanese so concerned about receiving the "proper" education?
2. What do you think of the entrance examination system?
3. How is the Japanese school system organized?

UNIT 3

COFFEE SHOPS, DISCOS AND BARS

Kissaten is a coffee shop where coffee as well as tea, soft drinks, and alcoholic beverages may be served. They are some of the most interesting places in Japan for kissaten are characterized by the most varying decor, atmosphere, and style. Each shop is a veritable fantasy world, an escape from the hectic, crowded world outside. The kissaten not only offers refreshing drinks but it also provides what we Americans with our park benches take for granted--a place to sit down!

Some kissaten are famous for the quality of their international coffees and teas, and others for live music and decor, if not all the above. One kissaten may look like an old Swiss chalet, another like a Manhattan discotheque, or a Viennese tea parlor, and even like a country and western bar where bluegrass is played by Japanese musicians.

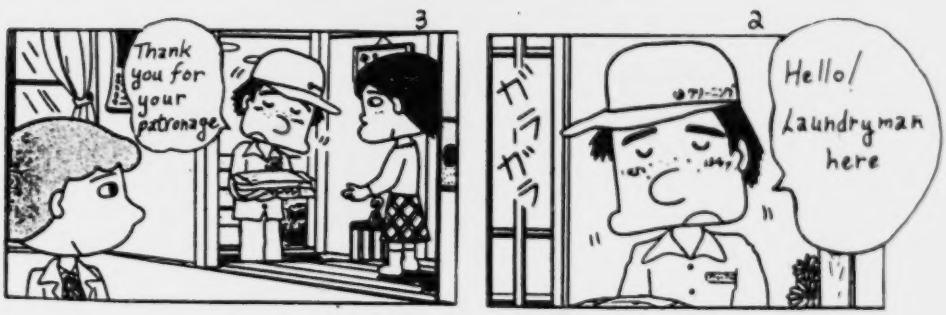
The most interesting feature of some bars and coffee shops is what is called karaoke. A recording of the instrumental portion of a popular song is played and a willful patron grabs a microphone and sings. It is irresistable to any ham.

People also come to kissaten to read, chat, listen to music, do business, romance, or meet a friend. Though the prices may be high (coffee can run as high as $3.00 per cup), the trip to another world is refreshing to the spirit.

Kissaten can be found almost anywhere but major restaurants and bars, nightclubs and discos are often clustered in night spots or entertainment districts. A good deal of business is conducted over dinner or drinks and it is not uncommon to see hordes of men in business suits as well as young people strolling through these bright alleys of neon.

In our story: Tanpopo meets business associates as she leaves the disco and she ends up accompanying them to a karaoke bar where she must listen to their less than talented singing.

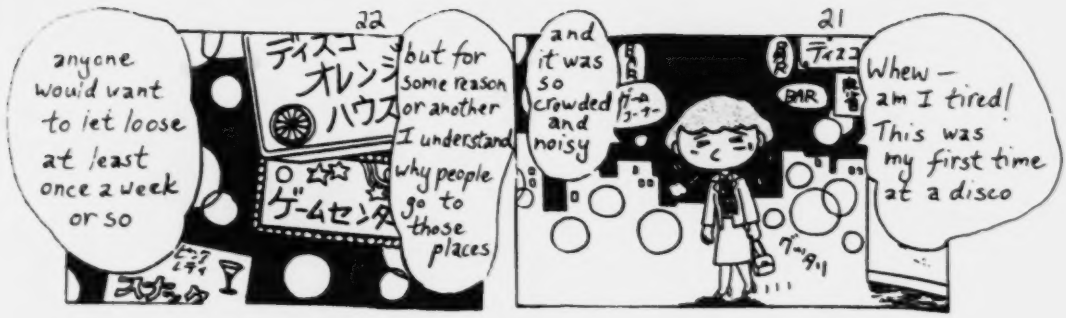
みんなフィーバーしてるう!
Everyone's got the Saturday Night Fever

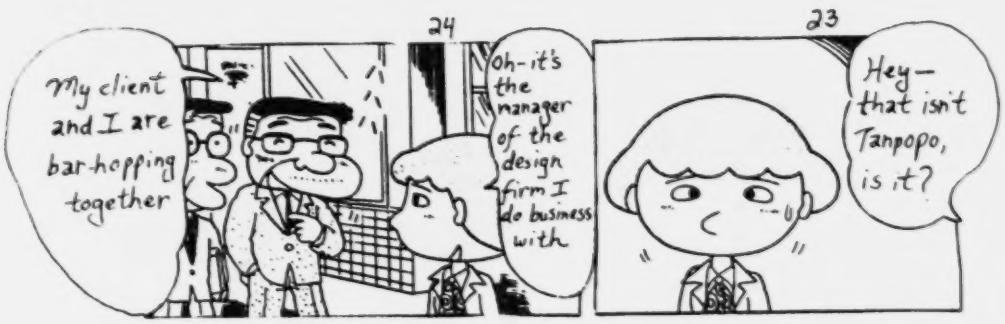

2
ガラガラ
Hello! laundryman here
3
Thank you for your patronage

4
That was the laundryman
5*
It's been a long time since I last saw you Tanpopo
I'm glad you came to see me.

7
so why don't we go dancing at a disco together?
ディスコ
and staying at home is so boring...
6
Grandma took my son to stay at our relative's house
It just so happens that my husband is off on a business trip...
9
There'll be lots of young men!
Since today happens to be Saturday let's go out + dance like they did in Saturday Night Fever
8*
Ha ha - even a housewife has to spread her wings for a change... what with raising kids and housework I'm always crabby...
Why Kazuko — going to a disco at your age?!
11
KAZUKO PUTS ON A WIG SO SHE CAN BE "INCOGNITO"
"DISCO KOKAPAGANA"
10
ディスコ
コカパガーナ
13
20 years old
At this place I pretend I am 20 and single so act accordingly O.K.?
...but I wonder if this kind of dancing is good enough
12
The only dances I know are the folk dances I did in high school...

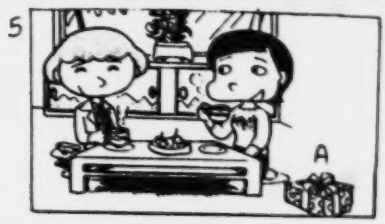
15
I'm pooped so I'll rest a bit
14
Aw— aren't you going to dance anymore?
17
He's handsome and stylish too... I wonder if he's a movie actor
That boy over there sure can dance, can't he!
16
19
See you later...
Uh, ya, well good-bye
18
It seems like she's known him for some time. she sure is quick!
Oh wow! He's talking with Kazuko
(Tanpopo speaks)
20
We ran into eachother accidentally and both felt so embarrassed
That guy is the laundryman who came to my house this afternoon!


22
ディスコ
ゲームセンタ
anyone would want to let loose at least once a week or so
but for some reason or another I understand why people go to those places
21
and it was so crowded and noisy
BAR
Whew — am I tired! This was my first time at a disco


24
My client and I are bar-hopping together
Oh-it's the manager of the design firm I do business with
23
Hey — that isn't Tanpopo, is it?

27
リンゴの花びら
Oh brother - I wonder if this is a sort of Saturday Night Fever too - one for middle aged men!
25
But, umm.....
The timing is perfect — why don't you come along too! (haha)
BAR
26 *
カラオケ
BAR
じゅんこ
バー

EVERYONE'S GOT THE SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER



FRAME #5 - A. When visiting a friend or relative it is common for the visitor to bring a small gift of some kind. The most common type of offering is food such as pastries, chocolates or traditional Japanese sweets or crackers.

#8 - In this balloon is pictured a traditional Japanese flower arrangement.

#26 - As described in this unit's essay, the sign says "Karaoke Bar."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Do we have any place comparable to the kissaten?

2. Why do you think Kazuko was embarrassed to see the laundryman at the disco?

3. When you visit a friend's house as Tanpopo did in this strip, do you bring small gifts? If so, under what circumstances?

UNIT 4

MARTIAL ARTS AND KENDŌ

The term "martial arts" is a misleading translation partly due to the fact that "martial" recalls to our minds thoughts of war, battles and conflict. The word in Japanese, budō, is written with two characters roughly meaning "military" (bu), and "way" or "path" (dō).

On the surface, martial arts such as karate, jūdō, and kendō seem to be methods of fighting and warfare. However, the underlying philosophy is not how to fight to hurt others but how to avoid conflict, and to create and maintain peace with our fellow human beings. More importantly the ideal is to make peace within oneself--to strengthen one's mind and body in order to create a harmony of thought and action, in other words, to achieve wisdom. More than an art of survival, budō stands for the art of living.

The martial arts grow out of a long Asian tradition whose roots can be traced back thousands of years. Just exactly where it began is hard to say. There was a famous Buddhist monk of the sixth century. He brought with him from India to China special breathing exercises which enabled monks to relax after a long day of prayer and defend themselves against physical attack (since their religion did not permit the use of weapons. This man, named Bodhidharma, is also credited with the creation of a boxing technique called shao-lin, named after the Shao-lin monastery in China where he served as an abbot. Kung Fu and T'ai Chi are two Chinese martial art forms which grew from this tradition. Weapons, of course, were introduced into the marial technique in the following centuries.

In Japan these so-called "fighting arts" were varied and refined in different ways by the warrior class, the samurai. More than a means of fighting, budō was, as the word suggests, a way of living, or the enrichment of the process of living. Warriors knew that at any moment they could be called to fight and so a means of coping with imminent death was developed through the discipline of the body, mind and spirit. Thus in coping with death they learned to cope with life, and a whole philosophy on how to conduct one's life developed.

Zen Buddhism has been intimately connected with budō. In fact, some will say the two are the same. In any case, a major idea in Zen is self-mastery. This means that one controls oneself rather than being controlled by one's own desires or the desires of others which are illusory and empty in nature.

True fighting ability was based on spontaneous intuitive action. One's own mind and thoughts were seen as the true enemy. If one was suddenly attacked but had to think about drawing out the sword, it was already too late; the enemy would have struck. Therefore, through many years of earnest discipline one could learn to act intuitively. A warrior merged with his sword so that no distinction between himself, the sword, and his action remained. No thoughts, especially fear, could get in the way between himself and his actions.

As you can see, budō in its ideal form is not a sport or competition, but rather is a way to self-development and self-mastery. In this way the

techniques learned in the dōjō (place of practice), which promote patience, perserverence, and strength of body and character are applied to every minute of one's life so that conflict is avoided with others and within oneself.

Kendō is one form of martial arts. Ken means "sword" and dō, is "path" or "way" implying again that kendō is a way of life, of thinking, and of acting.

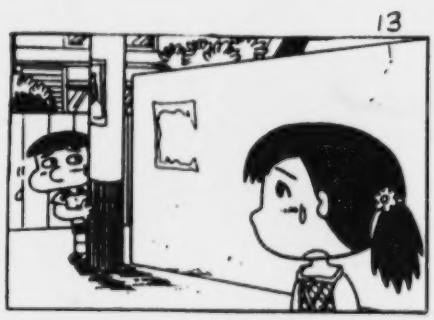
In this story, poor little Juntarō (a friend of Sumire), is tired of falling victim to bullies and wants to regain Sumire's respect. We will see how he goes about this noble task.

1*
泣き虫 弱虫
Crybaby
Weakling
A
2
I'm going to play at Juntaro's house!
3
This Juntaro is he Sumire's boyfriend?
Yah, he's the boy who lives in that big house on the other side of the park. He's a really nice, polite boy
4
大公
5
When I grow up I'm gonna be Juntaro's wife
He's so sweet and smart...

6
Oh no - He's being bullied again
ワーン
Ha ha - Juntaro is a crybaby
8
Ahhh!
Unless you'd rather be his substitute
7
What a pain! Shut up and mind your own business!
Stop it! You're always picking on Juntaro
9
わーん
キャーッ
Come on - let's get this one too!
11
Sob
10
わーん

12
Ooo
?

14
Are you O.K. Sumire?


13

16
I hate weaklings like you! That's the end of our friendship
Sumire...

15
You're horrible!
What's the matter with you?! I try to help you and you run off by yourself and I end up getting clobbered!

18
Tell him I'm not here! I'm not his friend anymore!
Sumire- Juntaro just came over to play

17

20
?!
19
ya! And since we're not friends, I have to give back all the stuff he gave me
22
...so please, let's stay friends... O.K. Sumire?
I'll train my mind and body with kendō and I won't be a weakling anymore
21
From now on I've decided to study kendō
What's going on Juntaro? Why are you dressed like that?
25
I wonder if I should make up with him after all..
Imagine! he's so afraid of going home alone in the dark that he has my mom take him!!
23
..let's make up
O.K. Juntaro..
24

CRYBABY WEAKLING

FRAME #1 - A. This is a kendō uniform.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Explain the fundamental philosophy of martial arts.

2. How do Americans strengthen their spirits, minds and bodies?

UNIT 5

HOUSING

Many of you have already heard what a crowded country Japan is but perhaps it is hard to comprehend when living in the midst of eternal Illinois cornfields and expansive skies. Imagine, if you will, boarding a train in Tokyo and being pushed into a wall of solid people by a railway employee. . . or how about shopping in a department store filled with Christmas-sized crowds all year around?

To make matters worse, private space is just as crowded as public space. From a population of 120 million, almost nine out of ten people live in urban settings. Considering the fact that only one-fifth of all land area in Japan is non-mountainous (plains, river valleys), where the majority of the population resides, you can well understand how tight Japanese housing must be.

An average sized apartment in a major city having two rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom might be the size of one large room in an American house. Some apartments in Tokyo are so small that they barely cover an area of 120 square feet.

Many companies in Japan provide the benefit of on-location housing for their employees because the cost of maintaining an apartment or even a home is more exhorbitant the closer one is to the heart of a city. However the dream of these families who live in company housing is to someday own their own home.

The Japanese have always had a ways and means of coping with small spaces, probably due to the fact that their country is predominantly mountainous. As explained in Unit One, bedding is stored away in closets so that rooms can be multifunctional. Tiny gardens are edged between houses and some homes are planned so that they look out over distant vistas, creating the illusion of expansiveness. Everyone has heard of miniature trees and plants called <u>bonsai</u>, and there is often a simple flower arrangement placed in the <u>tokonoma</u> (alcove for the display of art) in order to bring the outdoors inside.

For those apartment dwellers who do not have bathtubs, there are public bath houses. Contrary to western romanticism, these are largely segregated by gender and serve as friendly gathering places where one can gossip and visit with friends.

Since many of the roads are narrow, cars and trucks are generally smaller. Parking garages are ingeniously designed to accommodate the maximum number of cars.

The only places to sit down are in the numerous coffee shops and restaurants which line the narrow, winding streets. For those of us who take space for granted a trip to Japan would do us well.

1
GHOST CONDO
ユーレイマンション
新築
すみれ台四期分譲
受付中
現地案内
駅バス7分歩3分
一〇三平米土地付
二千五百万円
2DK
3DK
2K
3K
4K
ハラシマ
食品

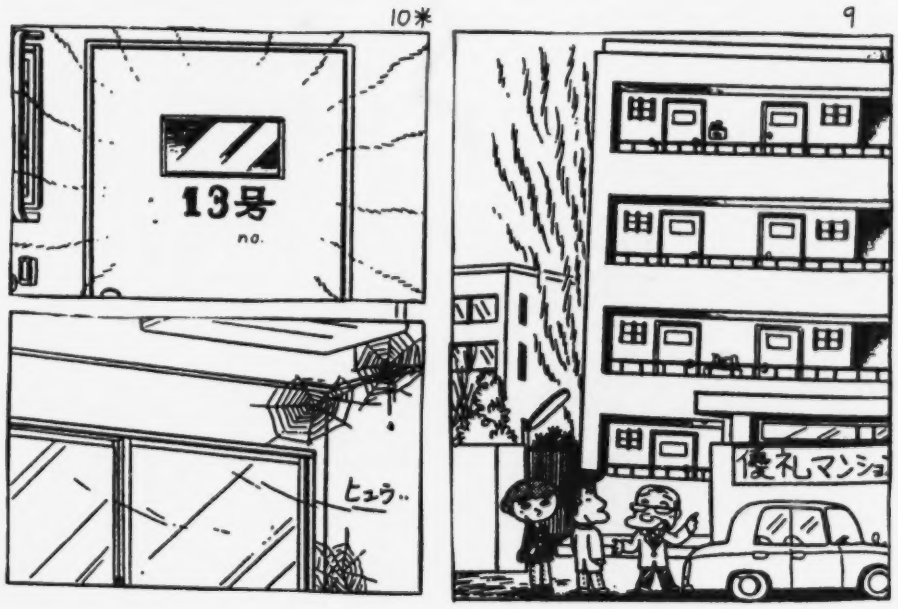
3
Since I have more work assigned, if we can manage it, maybe it would be better to be closer to the city...
If we do move, the apartment should really be bigger or we'd be miserable!
2*
The prices really have gone up since we last saw the realtors, haven't they?
マンション
2DK
和六・洋六・四五DK
月6万5000円
For two rooms and a dining kitchen it's $325.00 a month hmm....

5
It can't be helped though... our lease will be expiring soon and I heard the landlord is getting money to have it torn down
and the house we are renting now really suits me... the rent is cheap too
4
ウ～ン
but then again if it's closer to the city, the rent will be more expensive, won't it?

47

7
Ah welcome
Are you looking for a newlywed's apartment?
Good Afternoon
6
Huh?! it's really cheap, isn't it? Shall we get someone to show it to us?
3DK
月4万円
Hey - what do you think of this - it says $200.00 for 3 rooms plus a dining kitchen...

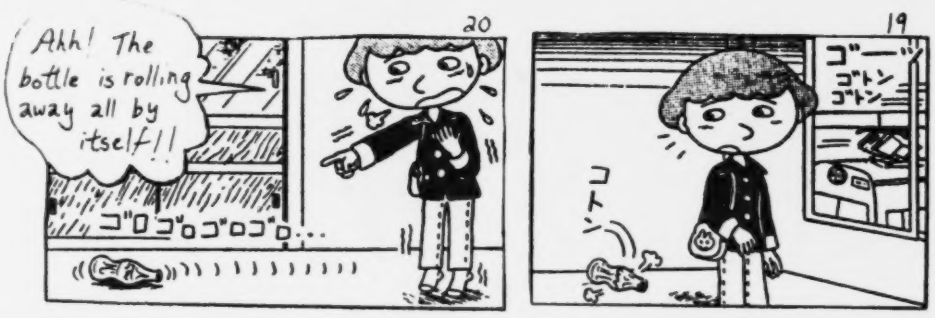
8*
we should've come better dressed
gee, hmpf... why does he think we want a cheap apartment for newlyweds?
I have a nice place with a bathroom and kitchen too!


10*
13号
no.
ヒュウ..
9
優礼マンショ

13
a draft seems to be coming from some place...
スー
Folks, at the price of 200, it's rather inexpensive
Maybe I'm imagining it but this room is really cold, isn't it?
ゾクゾク
12
Well, what do you think? It's pretty spacious, isn't it?
ヒュウウ...
ヒュウウウ:..ヒュウ...
14
ヒュー
ドロドロドロ...

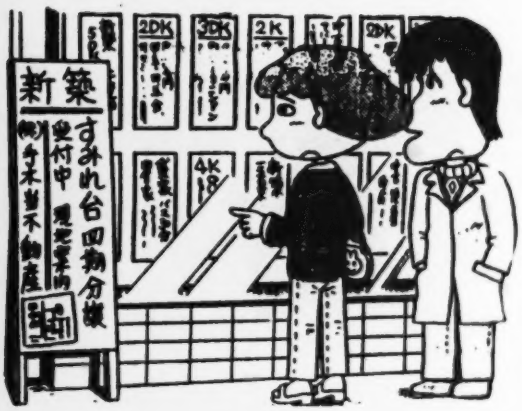
17
Ahh! What's that?!
a skeleton shape on the wall!!
15
It's the toilet flushing upstairs
ドロドロドロ...
there's a strange noise!
16
ベロベロベロ

18
Never you mind!
ゴシゴシ
ha ha ha — nothing to worry about with all the moisture, there's just mold growing on the wall


Ahh! The bottle is rolling away all by itself!!
20
コロコロコロ...
19
ゴーッ
ゴトン
ゴトン
コトン

A couple weeks later, through an introduction by Shimpei's photography teacher, they decided on a new place
21
It's no joke you know — that creepy deckpid condo!
He actually said the bottle rolled because the whole condo is tilted!
22
we're set for the next 3 months so let's take our time and look around
We haven't found any nice places, have we... {sigh}

GHOST CONDO



FRAME #1 - Shimpei and Tanpopo are looking at real estate listings.

#2 - "D.K." is the Japanese term for "dining kitchen" which is a room approximate to our "kitchen."

#8 - Some apartment facilities have only "common" or shared bathrooms.

"Mansion" is the term used by the Japanese to connote what we refer to as a "condominium."

#10 - Due to western influence, the number 13 is now considered unlucky. Traditionally odd numbers, especially 3, 5, 7 and 9 were seen as lucky. The number 4 was regarded as unlucky due to the fact that the root of the verb "to die" is pronounced the same as the number four (shi).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How do the Japanese compensate for the lack of space?

2. What are some of our "superstitions" about numbers?

UNIT 6

GIRL'S DAY

On March third, the Japanese celebrate O Hina Matsuri, the "Girl's Day" or "Doll Festival." A week or two prior to the holiday, an array of dolls representing the ancient Japanese court is displayed on red stands. These stands resemble steps and on the highest tier sit the Emperor and Empress. It is interesting to note that they sit on silk cushions instead of thrones as Japan was traditionally a "chairless" culture. On the next tier sit the court ministers, and the lower-ranking ladies-in-waiting. Musicians rest on the lower tiers. Accessories may include a hibachi (charcoal brazier used to generate heat), a special chest of drawers, tea ceremony equipment, dishes and a palanquin.

Each family takes pride in its display of dolls as many have been passed down for generations. New dolls are often purchased on the occasion of a girl's birth.

Peach blossoms are the major motif of the festival. Because of their softness they symbolize femininity.

There is a corresponding "Boy's Day" which occurs on the fifth of May. It is also known as the "Iris Festival" because this holiday comes during the iris season. Since iris leaves are shaped like swords, they came to be associated with the young boy who will grow to be as courageous as a warrior.

Some colorful aspects of this festival include kites in the shape of carp which are attached to poles on the roofs of houses. Since the carp swims upstream, it is hoped that boys too will acquire such strength and endurance.

Samurai armour is often displayed in the tokonoma and a set of warrior dolls illustrate famous battles. Even samurai armour made of chocolate can be purchased in department stores.

Children are well-loved in Japan, perhaps to the extent that an American might consider them down-right spoiled. The Japanese indulgence of children does not seem to have any adverse effects because discipline tightens considerably as the child grows. The origin of these children's festivals is best understood in the light of history. When times were less prosperous and life much harder, certainly these holidays represented a thanksgiving for a child's survival and hope for continued growth and strength.

1*
雛祭りの客
GUESTS For the GIRLS DOLL FESTIVAL
A
B
3
yes, the doll festival is coming up soon
Have you taken the dolls out?
2
5
My family was poor so we couldn't buy them
She was going to buy me the rest of the dolls in the set but before long she passed on
4
I remember when I was one year old my grandma gave me this Empress doll

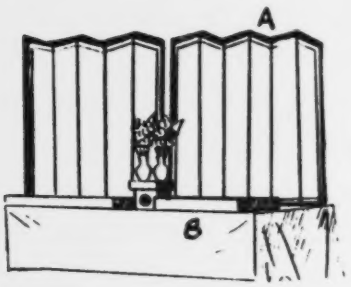
7
See what I mean - the prince's face is very refined and handsome, isn't it?
but - I really am attached to these dolls
6
If we just had a bit more money I'd really like to give Sumire the whole set of new dolls
(Tanpopo speaks here)
8
HuH?!
In fact, somehow he looks like you!
He's my idea of the perfect man
10
yes. How many rows of dolls do you have?
Do you have dolls displayed at your house too?
9
Meanwhile, at the park...
12
The dolls even come with crowns and family crests!
3 court ladies, 5 musicians, 2 minister of the left and of the right...
Mine has 8 rows, ya' know
11
What? just a row for the imperial prince?
(Sumire's friend is still talking)

14
13
17
Please bring lots of your friends so it'll be livlier and I can boast more.
Say, how about coming over for the doll festival?
15
Oh Yasuoka!
16
You didn't wet your bed this morning, did you?
You're in a good mood, aren't you?
19
And we are rich so there'll be lots of good food to eat
You're a dope! And to think I have 8 rows of dolls!
18
What?! Don't go there - it'll be boring
I'm going to Sumire's house so I can't go to yours

22
HA HA HA
20
Sumire is beaming
21
HA HA HA
HA HA HA

25
23
Sumire is popular, isn't she
..even little Juntaro came out of his way too...
24
Come to think of it, I haven't seen him since morning.
By the way, do you know where Tora is?

GUESTS FOR THE GIRL'S DOLL FESTIVAL

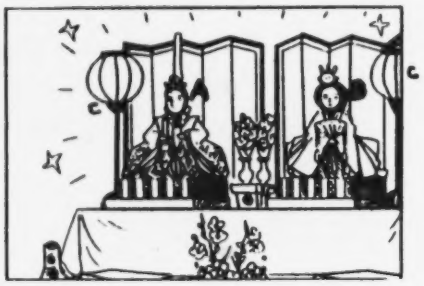


FRAME #1 - A. & B. Pictured are screens (A) and a platform (B) which serve as a display setting for the dolls.

#2 - A. This is the Emperor doll.

B. This is the Empress.

C. These are lamps.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What kinds of things are displayed on Girl's Day? How about Boy's Day?

2. Do we have a comparable holiday in the U.S.? How about Mother's Day or Father's Day?

3. Why do you think the Japanese have special holidays for children? Name some holidays for children in the U.S.

UNIT 7

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ONE JAPANESE HOMEMAKER

This strip deals with leisure activities of the family. Therefore as a complement a portrait of a homemaker's day will be provided as follows.

Tanpopo is not the "average" Japanese homemaker primarily due to the fact that she has a full time job. Presently in Japan child care is considered the sole responsibility of the wife and so child care centers are rare and babysitting is not well thought of. Many Japanese women do not work after marriage unless they have a part time or a home occupation. In fact, many companies will not advance a woman to a higher position figuring that she will quit when she marries or bears children.

Traditionally women were very much involved in daily working schedules as the majority of the population were farm laborers or merchants. Women of the samurai class were the only "ladies of leisure."

Being a homemaker and mother in Japan nowadays is quite an art and the role is respected, contrary to American biases. The home is the woman's "domain" and it is not unusual to find a husband or son who has never been allowed to assist with meal preparation. Also, many husbands entrust their full paycheck to their wives who handle the family budget, counting on her judgement when he receives an allowance.

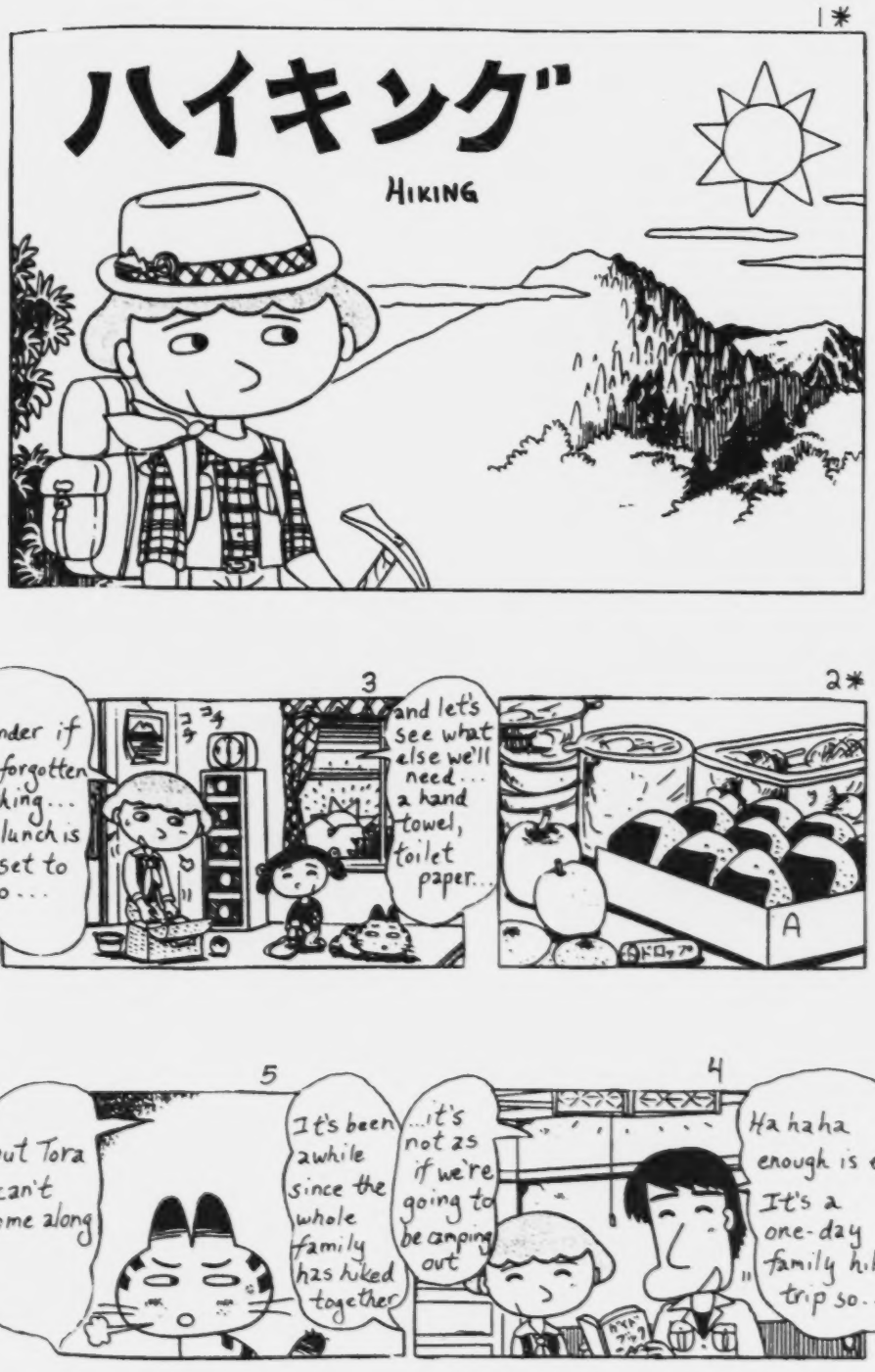
One day for one Japanese homemaker is as follows. She rises before the family and begins to prepare both breakfast and lunch boxes for the children. She makes sure everyone wakes up on time and while serving breakfast, irons the children's school uniforms. After she has sent everyone off in a flurry ("Hurry up, you'll be late for the bus!"), she finally sits down and eats her own breakfast. A clean-up of the kitchen and laundry duty follow.

Most Japanese do not have dryers and washing machines still require some additional handwork. Therefore she hangs up the clothes on a line just outside the backdoor or on a balcony if she lives in an apartment. Futon are also hung over balcony railings so that they are freshened by the sun.

After some lunch she might take part in some hobby or outside activity such as a choral group, photography club or writing lessons. On the way home she will shop for dinner.

While fixing dinner she will talk with her children newly arrived from school and have a bath prepared for her husband so he can wash before dinner. After a leisurely meal, which she serves to the family before taking a bite herself, she cleans up and sees that the children start their homework. She may help or do some sewing, watch television, or work on a hobby.

Before bedtime she makes sure the children bathe and if they are very young she will bathe with them. As she sees everyone off to bed, she will take a quiet moment for herself or finish up any household duty, reaching the pillow last and preparing to awaken first.


1*
ハイキング
HIKING
2*
A
3
I wonder if I've forgotten anything... the lunch is all set to go...
and let's see what else we'll need... a hand towel, toilet paper...
4
Hahaha enough is enough! It's a one-day family hiking trip so...
...it's not as if we're going to be camping out
5
but Tora can't come along
It's been awhile since the whole family has hiked together

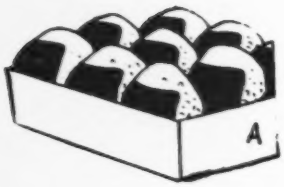
7
How beautiful she is!
ヤッホー
Mother Nature is wonderful, isn't she
8
ギラギラ
6*
We belong to the snow and the rocks...
Ma, it's still fall ya know!
10
Haha— you're a softy, aren't you? What happened to the spunk I saw a little while back?
(Shimpei talks)
ハア ハア フウ フウ
Whew! The family trail is pretty rough, isn't it?
9
ハア ハア フウ フウ
12
hahaha for a photographer physical strength is the name of the game, ya' know.... I'm always carrying even heavier stuff around with me so...
but Shimpei— you are really tough, aren't you!
11
If I had known it was going to be this rough, I would've come with the proper shoes— not sandles...
カ° カ°
lately I haven't been getting enough exercise— I can't keep up

15
Is this really a trail for families? Somehow it seems really steep to me...
ヒュウウ..
hmf— but it said so in the guidebook, didn't it?
13
ゼエ ゼエ
14
Don't let go Tanpopo!
キャー
ガラ ガラ
17
obviously we took the wrong trail
Looks like we are stuck here
16
ヒュウウウ...
カア カア
Huh!?
Mom— I can hear people's voices up there
18
hmm... let's see...
If that's the case then rather than walking around not knowing where we're going, wouldn't it be better to stick it out and wait for a rescue party?

20
ケーブルカー
ガヤ ガヤ
21
ケーブルカー
ガヤ ガヤ
but thank goodness it wasn't a disaster!
It looks as if we goofed and climbed the wrong mountain
22
Speaking of food, we haven't eaten lunch yet
Now that it's all over I'm really getting hungry
ゴミは ゴミ箱に

23
ワーイ
Well then, let's eat right away!
24
キャーッ
ガブ
25
Wah! Tora got into the basket and ate absolutely everything!!

HIKING



FRAME #1 - Hiking is a popular family sport.

#2 - A. This box contains a type of sushi wrapped in a sea vegetable called nori. Nori is dark green and processed so that is paper-thin.

#3 - Japanese often carry small packets of tissue which are toilet paper because many public bathrooms do not supply toilet paper.

#6 - Tanpopo is singing a traditional winter song and Sumire is protesting because it's not appropriate for the season.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does the description of one Japanese homemaker's day differ or resemble your mother's daily life?

2. What kind of family activities do we have in America?

UNIT 8

PACHINKO

"Pachinko" means "pinball" and is derived from the word pachin which means "to snap." Pachinko is not played on big horizontal tables as in this country but rather players are seated in rows before upright machines.

Pachinko parlors are noisy, lively, gaudy places filled with blaring music, ringing bells and flashing lights. A player buys steel balls for the purpose of winning more and cashing them in for prizes. It is fascinating to see rows of players steeped in an almost meditative concentration, practically mesmerized by the game. Pachinko seems to be a nice diversion from the worries and cares of daily life.

1*
THE FIRST TIME FOR PACHINKO
パチンコは初体験
A
駅前パチンコ
○○駅
3
but it's cold outside
Coffee ¥150
What should I do? If I go to a coffee shop it'll cost money...
2
I ended up here 30 minutes early
I was supposed to meet Shimpei on the way home but...
5
I've always wanted to try it at least once
パチンコ
PACHINKO
Well, I think maybe I'll try some Pachinko but I probably won't do that well
4
パチンコ

7
6
9
Ahhh! I did it again
8
This pachinko is a lot of fun!
Wow - it went in!
11
Oh my, I didn't realize I collected this much!
10
13
I'm gonna' do it with my eyes shut
Huh!? If I keep winning like this...
12
It's about time to meet Shimpei
What do I do? I wish I could get rid of them quickly

15
14
hmmm... I wonder if it's O.K. now..
16
OH NO!! It's twice as much!
18
excuse me, you've used your limit of balls
17
I've won so much... I wonder if the clerk will get mad at me
What'll I do? What'll I do?
20
景品交換所
Please exchange them for a prize over there
19
Hey hey- you left your balls- where are you going?
I'm sorry- good bye

22
huh!? um.....
That's 2,500 balls — What'll it be?
21
When Shimpei plays Pachinko he comes back with sugar & soy sauce
Ahh... now I remember, they exchange the balls for prizes
24
23
Huh? you'll exchange it all for soy sauce?
Oh, you have soy sauce. I'll have that please because I'm all out of it...
27
...But from then on Tanpopo had a succession of defeats in Pachinko
I wonder what I should get next time
25
...keeping a person waiting so long in the cold!
What on earth could Tanpopo be doing...
26
huh — what are all those bags?
Huff, puff sorry I kept you waiting...

THE FIRST TIME FOR PACHINKO

FRAME 1 - A. This building is a pachinko parlor.

A

Train Station

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why is Tanpopo so afraid because she is winning so much?

2. Do we have any place like a pachinko parlor where we can get our minds off our troubles or just pass the time?

UNIT 9

JAPANESE GHOSTS AND CATS

The supernatural in Japan can manifest itself in a myriad of ways but one thing is always certain--gods and ghosts are as much a part of the everyday world as any tangible object.

There are numerous neighborhood shrines, some even on the roofs of modern office buildings, in addition to family altars called butsudan (Buddha shelf). Tablets marking the names and birth and death dates of deceased family members are kept in butsudan. Some homes also have a small altar called a kamidana (god-shelf), which is a space for homage and respect to the gods. All the above attest to the close relationship between the natural and supernatural.

Spirits are thought to be residing in trees, rocks, waterfalls and even mountains (Mt. Fuji is considered sacred); there are gods of thunder, lightning and rain. These together with the spirits of the deceased can all be classified under one generic term, namely kami. Kami is not "God" in the western sense although the word can be used to stand for God.

Kami can be anything sacred, profane, powerful, awe-inspiring, or extraordinary. A person of exceptional talent or skill such as a shōgun (military ruler), can be revered as a kami after death.

Malevolent spirits are usually those who have been wronged in life. Other spirits can be mischieveous, often playing tricks on people. Still others bestow good fortune on humans. The only sure thing about kami is that they are unpredictable.

Prior to the advent of television it was a popular custom to relate ghost stories to pass the time on a hot summer night. As there was no such thing as air conditioning (and most Japanese homes do not use it now), one could cool off by shivering with fright! Television thus continues the tradition.

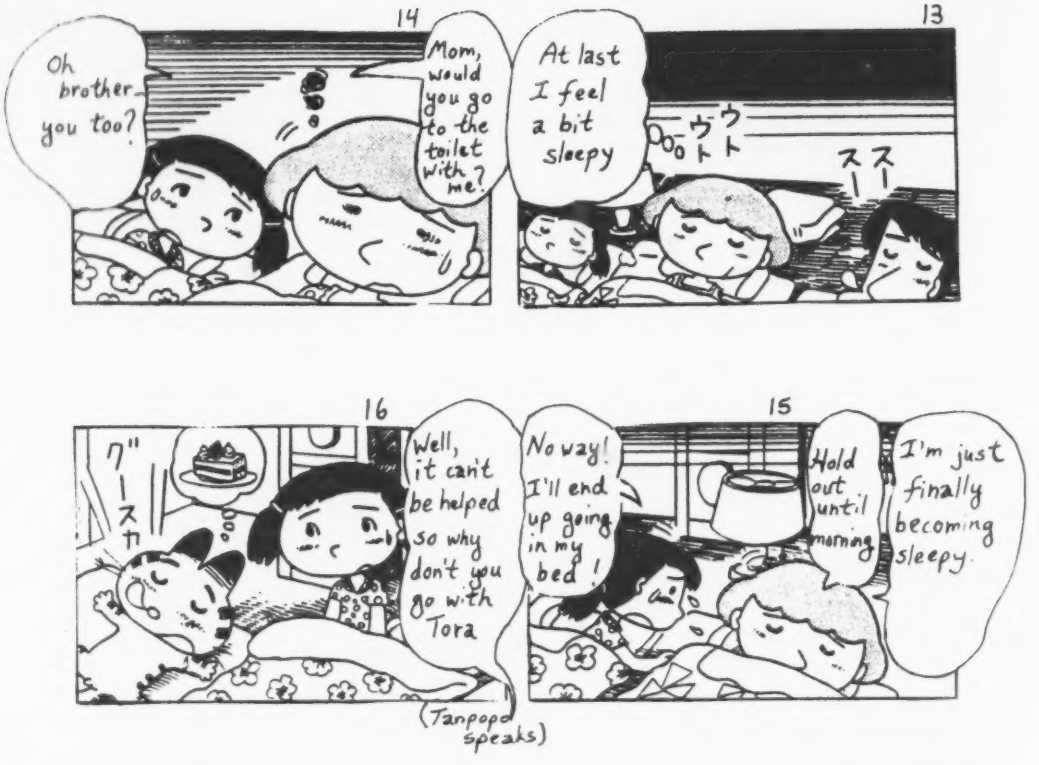
The cat in Japanese folklore, along with foxes and badgers, was often thought to possess the power to bewitch human beings. For instance, a fox or a cat would turn into a beautiful woman and intoxicate a man to his destruction, making him spend all his money and neglect his obligations.

On the other hand, cats could represent good luck because certain male tabby cats were brought on ship by captains in order to avoid shipwreck.

Japan has a rich heritage of such folklore and it is hoped that this brief glimpse will stimulate further investigation into Japanese cosmology.

1*
TORA THE GHOSTLY CAT
怪猫トラ!
3
ヒュー
ドロドロ
キャー
2
You saw me — that was a mistake
5
Ha ha ha me afraid? A man of my age afraid of such a silly movie...
Shimpei, aren't you afraid?
4
Ha ha, even chickens like you+ Sumire like to see scary things sometimes
ドロドロ
ギャー
Nowadays energy conservation is big so maybe that's why they are showing so many ghost stories this year

7*
6
9
Oh! Shimpei, are you awake too?
Tanpopo...
8
カ カ
ナ チ
Why did I watch that scary movie before bed? Now I'm all agitated and can't sleep
12
He's a big talker— but he's really the biggest coward
yes, yes {hmpf}
Tanpopo are you there?
10
But I really don't want to go...
I want to go to the bathroom— can we go together?
Somehow I feel like a ghost may appear + I'm scared
Please do it for me I beg you!


14
Oh brother you too?
Mom, would you go to the toilet with me?
13
At last I feel a bit sleepy
ウトウト
スースー
16
グースカ
Well, it can't be helped so why don't you go with Tora
(Tanpopo speaks)
15
No way! I'll end up going in my bed!
Hold out until morning
I'm just finally becoming sleepy.
18
ニャーゴ
Tora don't leave me!
17
ムニャ
ムニャ
Tora! Come on wake up! Hey Tora!
18
ズルズル

22
BOO!
It's a cat ghost!
20
Thanks for waiting

24
oh no — my lipstick and best dress!!
WAAH! Tora scared me!
23
huh? w..what was that?!

TORA THE GHOSTLY CAT!

FRAME # 1 - Pictured is a cat demon.

7 - It is not uncommon for young children to sleep with parents.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you think kami are?

2. What kinds of ghosts and spirits do Americans recognize (whether on television, in movies or in relation to holidays such as Christmas and Halloween)?